



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

MAR 08 2019

Eileen Sobeck, Executive Director
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812-2815

RE: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Quality Review for California (2019 California PQR)

Dear Ms. Sobeck,

In late March, EPA will be initiating a permit quality review (PQR) of California's implementation of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination (NPDES) program. The purpose of a PQR is to assess how States are implementing the requirements of the NPDES program, including a review of select permits issued by the State and site visits to review administrative records, as needed. After the review, EPA will develop a report to highlight good permitting practices and areas that may need additional improvement.

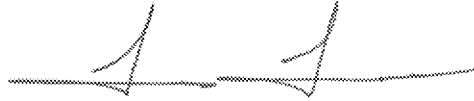
EPA last completed a PQR for California in 2014, including review of permits issued in Regional Boards 2, 4, 5, and 9. For your reference, the final report is available at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/pqr_california_report.pdf. For the 2019 California PQR, EPA will evaluate a select number of permits issued by the Boards we did not review in 2014:

- State Water Resources Control Board
- Regional Water Quality Control Board 1 – North Coast
- Regional Water Quality Control Board 3 – Central Coast
- Regional Water Quality Control Board 6 – Lahontan
- Regional Water Quality Control Board 7 – Colorado River
- Regional Water Quality Control Board 8 – Santa Ana

Three types of permit reviews are included in the PQR process: core reviews, national topic reviews, and regional topic reviews. The core review focuses on the required elements included in a permit and factsheet. The national topic review will focus on 1) permit controls for nutrients in non-TMDL waters, 2) effectiveness of POTW permits with food processor contributions, and 3) small MS4 permits. The regional topic review will include reasonable potential analysis procedures and TMDL implementation.

In the coming weeks, my staff will be reaching out to staff and managers at the State and Regional Boards to discuss program highlights, priorities, initiatives, and challenges, and to schedule site visits as necessary to review permit files. We greatly appreciate your staff's participation in the PQR. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Becky Mitschele of my staff at (415) 972-3492 or mitschele.becky@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tomás Torres', written over a horizontal line.

Tomás Torres, Director
Water Division

Electronic cc: Diana Messina, State Water Resources Control Board (SB)
Karen Mogus, State Water Resources Control Board (SB)
Matthias St. John, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RB1)
John Robertson, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RB3)
Patty Kouyoumdjian, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RB6)
Paula Rasmussen, Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (RB7)
Hope Smythe, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RB8)